

Harlem Children's Zone

Promise Academy II®

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Principal
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Shannon Ortiz-Wong
Principal
High School
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AGENDA

Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy II
Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024
at
245 West 129th Street
New York, NY

- I. Acceptance of the Minutes
- II. CEO Report (*Kwame Owusu-Kesse*)
- III. Superintendent's Updates (*Saskia Brown*)
- IV. HCZ Promise Academy II Updates
 - i. Elementary School (*Kiana Morris*)
 - ii. Middle School (*Veroniqua Delva*)
 - iii. High School (*Shannon Ortiz-Wong*)
- V. Financial Report (*Ralph Stefano*)

**Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy II Charter School
Board Meeting
Thursday, September 19, 2024
245 West 129th Street**

Attendees: Geoffrey Canada, Kwame Owusu-Kesse, Mitch Kurz, Ellanor (Bodie) Brizendine, Willie Mae Lewis, Keith Meister, Alfonso Wyatt, Candice Ashby, Saskia Brown, Ari Browne, Amy Chan, Amy Deal, Veroniqua Delva, Garraud Etienne, LaKiesha George, Madelaine German-Schultz, Jenn Klein, Stephanie Lilavois, Katherine Martinez, Liam McCarthy, Kiana Morris, Shannon Ortiz-Wong, Michelle Paige, and Toya Stillely.

Acceptance of Minutes (Geoffrey Canada)

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM, and a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 18 was unanimously approved.

CEO Report (Kwame Owusu-Kesse)

Chief Executive Officer Kwame Owusu-Kesse announced that former Deputy Superintendent Dr. Saskia Brown was promoted to Superintendent of HCZ Promise Academy Charter Schools and Early Childhood Programs. Mr. Owusu-Kesse lauded Dr. Brown's leadership and commitment to collaboration.

Mr. Owusu-Kesse also announced that three new principals have been appointed to HCZ Promise Academy II Charter School and that Dr. Brown has been working with the new team to align them with HCZ's strategic plan. He also reported that the principals would receive ongoing support from the leadership team as they transition into their new roles.

HCZ Promise Academy scholars, along with Mr. Owusu-Kesse and staff from HCZ Promise Academy After School and Athletics, appeared on "The Today Show" at Rockefeller Plaza with NBA star Stephen Curry. Scholars shot hoops with the NBA champion and Olympic gold medalist, posed for photos, and took home copies of Curry's new graphic novel, *Sports Superheroes Volume #1: Stephen Curry*.

Mr. Owusu-Kesse introduced two new HCZ staff members:

Chief Administrative Officer Garraud Etienne has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MBA from Columbia Business School. After successful careers in the private and public sectors, Mr. Etienne has dedicated the past 20 years to the nonprofit sector and to improving outcomes for New Yorkers from under-resourced backgrounds. This dedication has included managing a city-wide portfolio of family homeless shelters and serving as operations leader for human services organizations. Garraud previously served as COO and is currently on the board of Settlement Housing Fund, a New York City nonprofit developer of affordable housing.

As an operations leader, Garraud has developed deep expertise in all aspects of nonprofit operations. Bringing a diverse skill set to HCZ, he also holds extensive experience in finance and human resources. He looks forward to pairing his operations and program leadership experience to drive operational excellence at HCZ and to positively impact the organization.

Harvard Business School Leadership Fellow Amy Chan earned an MBA from Harvard University and an undergraduate degree in accounting and marketing from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to earning an MBA, Amy worked in Predictive Analytics, Consulting, and Strategy at Mastercard and Boston Public Schools. She is looking forward to learning more about HCZ's unique approach to education and making a measurable impact.

Superintendent's Update (Dr. Saskia Brown)

Superintendent Dr. Saskia Brown reported that enrollment is 1,184 for HCZ Promise Academy I and 1,055 for HCZ Promise Academy II. Dr. Brown thanked Operations Manager Kameyia Van Allen, the Central Office Team, school Parent Coordinators, and school leaders for their success in meeting enrollment targets for the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Brown also reported that the schools exceeded their attendance goals for the Summer Boost program. The Schools were also chosen by Bloomberg Philanthropies to highlight the program. The Summer Boost team visited on June 16. Dr. Brown thanked Principals LaKiesha George and Madelaine Schultz, Assistant Principals Kelly Willinger, and LaRen Bierra, Managing Director of Teaching and Learning Katherine Martinez, and Managing Director of HCZ Promise Academy After School, Athletics & Armory Alicia Junor, who showcased the work and collaboration that occurred during the summer.

Leaders welcomed back HCZ Promise Academy and Harlem Gems staff at the end of August. Dr. Brown met with Chairman of the Promise Academy Board and HCZ President and Founder Geoffrey Canada, and Mr. Owusu-Kesse, to talk about the 2024-2025 school year theme, The Path Forward, and how it connects with phase two of the organization's strategic plan.

The Leadership Institute has arranged for HCZ Promise Academy and Harlem Gems leadership to receive on-site and virtual coaching from McRel International on balanced student leadership. Dr. Brown thanked Interim Principal Dr. Veronique Delva for connecting leaders with this professional development opportunity.

Dr. Brown announced three new HCZ Promise Academy II principals:

Principal Kiana Morris has been an educator for nine years. Starting her career at Uncommon Charter Schools, she served as a teacher for kindergarten through third grade, then transitioned to instructional leader for first and second grades. She then became principal at Ocean Hill Elementary School. Ms. Morris has a Bachelor's Degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences from SUNY Cortland and a Master's Degree

in Special Education from Relay Graduate School of Education. Ms. Morris is excited to contribute to HCZ's generational impact and provide scholars and families with access to supportive opportunities.

Interim Principal Dr. Veroniqua Delva, formerly the Director of Training and Development, has been with HCZ Promise Academy for 12 years and is deeply committed to scholars and the school's mission. She began her career with the organization as a fifth-grade teacher of ELA and Social Studies. She also served as a Training and Development Coach before being promoted to the Director of Training and Development. Dr. Delva earned a Bachelor's in Sociology and a Master's Degree in Childhood Education with advanced certification in Special Education from Adelphi University. She has recently earned her Doctorate Degree in Innovation, Leadership, and Continuous Improvement from Concordia University. Dr. Delva is excited about collaborating with her fellow leaders and what they will do for our scholars together.

Principal Shannon Ortiz-Wong brings a wealth of expertise in the education field, serving families in her hometown of New Haven and in New York for two decades. Ms. Ortiz-Wong holds a Master's Degree in Secondary Education from the University of New Haven and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from New York University. As an administrator at New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities II in the Bronx, Ms. Ortiz-Wong played a pivotal role in leading professional development initiatives for staff and supervising programs, including Special Education, Literacy, and Humanities. Her efforts were instrumental in the school's transformation, guiding it from a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan designation in 2018 to achieving a five-year renewal in 2023. She is excited to leverage her deep understanding of pedagogy and leadership principles to serve the families of HCZ.

Dr. Brown also thanked Kaitlynn Conwright for her service as HCZ Promise Academy II High School Principal for the past two years and congratulated her appointment as Director of STEM in HCZ Promise Academy's Central Office.

State Testing Results (Dr. Saskia Brown)

Dr. Brown reported on 2024 state testing results for HCZ Promise Academy Charter Schools:

In ELA, HCZ Promise Academy I and II dropped three percentage points in proficiency – HCZ Promise Academy I (HCZ PA I): 59% and HCZ Promise Academy II (HCZ PA II): 52% from 2023 to 2024. However, both schools outperformed their districts, HCZ PA I scoring 22 percentage points over CSD05 and HCZ PA II scoring overall seven percentage points more than CSD04¹ and 15 percentage points over CSD05. Both schools also outperformed their New York City (NYC) peers (NYC: 49%) and, according to preliminary data, their New York State (NYS) peers (NYS: 46%). Additionally, fifth and eighth graders across HCZ Promise Academy Charter Schools

¹ HCZ PAII Charter School is divided into two NYC districts: Grades K-5 (CSD 04) and grades 6-12 (CSD 05).

outperformed their NYC and NYS peers by five or more percentage points. 2024 was the first year that fifth- and eighth-grade scholars took computer-based testing.

HCZ Promise Academy Students with Disabilities earned higher overall proficiency ELA than their NYC peers (33% vs. 21%).

Math proficiency in HCZ PA I and II increased from 2023 to 2024, surpassing pre-Covid levels at HCZ PA I (76%). HCZ PA I scholars outperformed CSD 05, NYC, and NYS peers (according to preliminary data), and HCZ PA II scholars outperformed CSD 04 and 05, NYC, and NYS peers (HCZ PA I: 76% and HCZ PA II: 62%). HCZ PA I also outperformed NYC white scholars by four percentage points (76% vs. 72%).

Additionally, seventh- and eighth-grade scholars scored 25 percentage points or higher in math than their NYC and NYS peers.

HCZ Promise Academy Students with Disabilities earned higher overall proficiency in math than their NYC peers (48% vs. 27%).

HCZ Promise Academy II Elementary School (Kiana Morris)

Principal Kiana Morris reported the Elementary School's attendance was 90% for June and 75% for the summer.

The Elementary School is on track with phase II of the build-out on the second and third floors of their school building at 70 East. The Elementary School opened a new wing of the building and moved fifth-grade classrooms there. Additionally, the Elementary School decorated the STEAM lab in the new wing with plants.

On September 12, the Elementary School hosted a back-to-school night for 330 families. Families and scholars had the opportunity to view classrooms and learn about school expectations. The physical education teachers hosted a program in the courtyard. Families also met with the after-school team to sign up for the program.

Scholars in grades three through five began their i-Ready assessments on September 17. Scholars in kindergarten through second grade will begin their assessments on September 23.

HCZ Promise Academy I Middle School (Dr. Veroniqua Delva)

Interim Principal Dr. Veroniqua Delva reported the Middle School's attendance was 93% for June and 76% for the summer.

The Middle School hosted an orientation for the parents of sixth-grade incoming scholars to meet school leadership. Staff reviewed expectations for the upcoming school year and academic and behavioral standards with families.

On the week of August 19, new teachers across HCZ Promise Academy Charter Schools participated in professional development, learned about HCZ's history, and discussed the organization's mission and impact. Teachers also viewed *Harlem*

Rising, which chronicles the history of HCZ and took a deep dive into the pillars of instruction. The High School hosted a Welcome Back Town Hall for scholars, focusing on advocacy. School leaders set the tone for the school year, outlining expectations and priorities and providing an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

On September 19, the Middle School will hold a back-to-school night.

HCZ Promise Academy II High School (Shannon Ortiz-Wong)

Principal Shannon Ortiz-Wong reported the High School's attendance was 91% for June and 84% for the summer.

Over the summer, Principal Ortiz-Wong and Dr. Deal worked together with Promise Academy After School & Athletics to support scholars with enrichment activities and credit recovery. Scholars also benefited from Summer Exposure Programs.

Principal Ortiz-Wong encouraged high school staff members to adopt the theme of "Starting Strong and Staying Strong." The principal called the parents of high school scholars to introduce herself to families and hosted virtual townhalls.

High School leadership worked with Human Resources to fill 12 vacant positions.

The High School held a back-to-school night for families of seniors and met the Managing Director of College Success Office Kevin Dougherty.

Financial Update (Kwame Owusu-Kesse)

Mr. Owusu-Kesse reported that HCZ Promise Academy II's September 13 enrollment is 1,055, which is 48 favorable versus the budget. The school's revenue is on budget at \$1.9M YTD. Expenses are \$0.3M favorable, at \$1.5M YTD. HCZ has not made a contribution through one month of FY25.

HCZ Promise Academy II

September 2024 Attendance Report

Date	HCZ PAII Elementary School			HCZ PAII Middle School			HCZ PAII High School		
	Number of Students		% of Students Present	Number of Students		% of Students Present	Number of Students		% of Students Present
	Absent	Enrollment		Absent	Enrollment		Absent	Enrollment	
9/4	48	565	92%	18	268	93%	22	212	90%
9/5	47	565	92%	20	267	93%	16	212	92%
9/6	54	564	90%	28	265	89%	15	212	93%
9/9	33	566	94%	10	262	96%	18	212	92%
9/10	26	567	95%	17	263	94%	12	212	94%
9/11	20	567	96%	17	263	94%	14	211	93%
9/12	33	567	94%	15	263	94%	17	211	92%
9/13	30	567	95%	20	262	92%	13	211	94%
9/16	37	569	93%	21	262	92%	23	211	89%
9/17	42	570	93%	19	262	93%	18	211	91%
9/18	32	571	94%	13	262	95%	18	211	91%
9/19	35	572	94%	13	262	95%	16	211	92%
9/20	37	573	94%	18	262	93%	23	211	89%
9/23	33	574	94%	19	262	93%	21	211	90%
9/24	39	574	93%	17	262	94%	22	211	90%
9/25	40	575	93%	17	262	94%	21	211	90%
9/26	29	578	95%	20	262	92%	20	211	91%
9/27	37	579	94%	19	262	93%	18	211	91%
9/30	39	576	93%	18	262	93%	14	211	93%
Average	36	570	94%	18	263	93%	18	211	92%



Promise Academy II

FY 2025 August YTD Budget vs. Actual

		Budget	Actual	Fav/(Unfav)	Full Year Budget
2025 Budgeted Average Enrollment	(a)	1,007	1,007	-	1,007
DOE and other gov't funding	(b)	\$ 3.8	\$ 3.9	\$ 0.1	\$ 22.7
Expenses:					
Salaries		2.8	2.7	0.1	14.5
Benefits		0.7	0.5	0.2	4.5
OTPS		0.6	0.7	(0.1)	3.6
Total Expenses	(c)	4.1	3.9	0.2	22.6
Expenses in excess of public funding		-	-	-	-
Contribution Components:					
HCZ Contribution		-	-	-	-
per student (whole \$)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

(a) Enrollment as of Oct 1: 1,049 (Historically we experience some loss during the year).

(c) Excludes PA Initiatives, bonus, growth fund, & other HCZ allocations.